

FILE NOTE

FILE NO: B39/15
DATE: 4/2/99
SUBJECT: Possible carcinogenic history of Wentworth park area

Mrs Lopatniuk of 15 Bembil Street, Howrah, (ph: 62444269) contacted me to express her concern at the high incidence of morbidity due to cancer in the area adjacent to Wentworth Park, Howrah.

To surmise the situation; she believes that an unusually high proportion of people in her area have contracted some form of cancer and it has become endemic in families that have settled in this area. Many families have since moved on and she knows that they are still experiencing a high incidence of cancer. Many of the people that died from cancer have lived in the area since it was originally subdivided.

Mrs Lopatniuk has lived there for over thirty years now and claims that she remembers somebody saying, shortly after she and her husband built in the area, that the subdivision should never have been approved due to the land being contaminated.

Mrs Lopatniuk went on to say that nine people have died in this small area from cancer and that the age of death of these people has been reasonably young, with many of them dying in their forties. They all lived in the vicinity for 20 years or more.

Due to the previous existence of a tip in what is now Wentworth Park, she remembered a lot of spraying to control mosquitoes - prevailing sea breezes would have carried the spray drift over the subdivision in which she built. Recent property owners have never been subjected to this spray; and to her knowledge none of them are suffering from incidences of cancer in their families.

In addition to the spraying there were also three or four transformers in the area that she feels contributed to the carcinogenic load facing the residents. Aurora recently put up a new transformer in a similar place to a previous unit. Two people who lived next to the old unit evidently died of cancer, but Mrs Lopatniuk found, after speaking with the Aurora workers, that there is no record of the old transformer existence.

Later that day I met Mrs Lopatniuk onsite so that she could walk me around the area and describe her belief as well as show me a number of addresses where she claims people have contracted cancer. These addresses and a short description of cancer incidence are described below: (you will require a street atlas for reference purposes) *The following list was provided by Mrs Lopatniuk.*

- 23 Salacia Avenue - Mr Cruise died of cancer when he was 40 years old;
- 24 Correa Street - Burnie Denholm died of Alzheimers;
- 22 Correa Street - Man died of cancer and within a year his wife also died of cancer;
- 18 Correa Street - Mr Kerslake lived there for 25 years until he died of cancer. Mrs Kerslake is currently in palliative care at St Johns Hospital, dying of cancer;
- 11 Correa Street - Man living there had cancer, however treatment was successful and has remained clear since; *Al. ed.*
- 7 Correa Street - Occupant currently has a cancerous growth; *X*
- 4 Bembil Street - Lady in late thirties died of cancer 12 - 15 years ago;
- 8 Bembil Street - Lady was suffering breast cancer, however died in a car accident;
- 9 Bembil Street - Man died of throat cancer at approximately 48 years of age.
- 15 Bembil Street - Mrs Lopatniuk recently had a rare benign growth removed that was sent to the university for further examination. Her daughter also suffers immunological problems. Her son was diagnosed with leukaemia when he was 8 years old. Her husband has alzheimers (three other men living in this area have been diagnosed with this disease - all settling in the area at the same time and contracting alzheimers at the same time). Her grandson has cancer.

Mrs Lopatniuk has previously taken her concerns to the Menzies centre but failed to interest them in undertaking a study, nevertheless she is convinced that there is some merit to her concerns - which she shares with a number of elderly neighbours.

I only took minimal details and contacted D Coleman of your department to determine whether the matter is worth investigating. D Coleman said that he would be prepared to

have a look at what information has been gathered thus far and make such a decision from that. It was agreed that I would remain the contact person for Mrs Lopatniuk at this stage.

D Judson